(a) whether the international prices of crude oil have been rising of late;

(b) if so, what is the percentage of rise to the prices of crude oil as on date; and

(e) what is the likely impact on the import of crude oil by the Government and on the domestic prices of crude ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The average increase lias been about 7.4% in March, 1993 over Janu-ary, 1993 on Marker-crude oil prices.

(c) Short fluctuations in the prices o crude are common. The overall impact -during 1993-94 is, however, too curly to be assessed.

**Offer for Development of Oil and Gas Fields in Assam**

1189. SHRI MOH1NDER SINGH LATHER : SHRI ANANT RAM JAI SWA L :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AKD NATURAL. GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a numbr of Oil and Gas fields in Assam were offered to the Private Companies for development ;

(b) whether the response of Private Companies to take up the development of Oil and Gas field have been poor; and

(c) If so, what are the reasons therefor and the manner in which Government proposes to encourage the Private Companies to take up the development of Oil and Gas fields in Assam ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. Three small and four medium-sized oil and gas fields in Assam were offered to private companies for development.

(b) No offer has been received from any private company for development of the fields in Assam.

(c) Since bidding by companies is related to their evaluation of commercial aspects, it is not possible to state specific reasons for the absence of bids. Fields in Assam would continue to be offered in future also.

**Expert Committee to study Import of Natural Gas**

1190. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: WiU the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to set up an expert Committee to study the issues relating to the import of natural gas with a view to increase its availability in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) and (b) Government have set up an Expert Group to look into the proposed import of natural gas. Its main terms of reference, are to examine the offers/ possibilities of importing natural gas/ LNG, to assess the comparative tech-no-economic viability of importing natural gas and LNG, to suggest alternative land-fall points, to. consider alternatives of creating an appropriate distribution network, etc.